Institute of Sciences, Humanities & Liberal Studies

Department of Languages
Topic: Preposition, Conjunctions and Punctuation
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THE PREPOSITION

The preposition is a word "pre-posed" or places before a noun or pronoun to relate that noun or pronoun to another word in the sentence.
Many, but not all, prepositions show a relationship of space or time.

Give the crust <u>to</u> the birds. ("To" shows the relationship between "give" and "birds.")
The girl <u>in</u> the autogyro is a student. ("In" shows the relationship between "girl" and "autogyro.")
The warden fell <u>off</u> his velocipede and <u>into</u> the cement mixer and died.
("Off" shows the relationship between "warden" and "velocipede"; "into" shows the relationship between "fell" and "mixer.")

Common Prepositions:

in	of	between	beside	over
around	through	like	near	by
within	among	according to	above	off
with	without	after	against	past
before	beyond	behind	into	under
about	across	during	toward	at
up	down	instead of	upon	for
below	except	because of	since	on

Object of the Preposition:

The noun or pronoun that the preposition relates to another word in the sentence is called the object of the preposition and is in the objective case,

The pussycat on the sofa swallowed the goldfish.
("sofa" is the object of the preposition "on.")
Willy ate the garlic ice cream with a long spoon.
("spoon" is the object of the preposition "with.")
Hansel and Gretel took a crumb cake into the forest with them.

("forest" is the object of the preposition "into," and
"them" is the object of the preposition "with.")

Prepositional Phrase:

The prepositional phrase = the preposition + its object + whatever
modifies the object:

over the river
through the woods
to grandmother's house
without doubt.

Uses of the Prepositional Phrase:

The prepositional phrase can act as an <u>adjective</u>, modifying a noun or
pronoun:

The book <u>on the shelf</u> is old. (The prepositional phrase describes the
noun "book.")
Cats <u>with short tails</u> like sour cream. (The prepositional phrase
describes "cats.")

The prepositional phrase can act as an <u>adverb</u>, modifying a verb, an
adjective, or another adverb:

The book fell <u>off the shelf.</u> (The prepositional phrase describes where
the book fell.)
People who eat hot dogs <u>with mayonnaise</u> will eventually die.
(The prepositional phrase describes how
people eat hot dogs.)

Avoid ending a sentence with a preposition, if possible, since a preposition is
a weak word whose function is to relate one word to another. Placing a
preposition in the emphatic final position of a sentence wastes a dramatic
opportunity to stress a key word or concept.

Weak: Do not betray the ideals these men died <u>for</u>. (Why stress
"for"?)

THE CONJUNCTION

Conjunctions (Latin <u>con</u> + <u>junc</u> = join with) link words, or phrases, or

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clauses, or sentences.
There are two kinds of conjunctions:
<u>**Coordinating Conjunctions:**</u> **connect words, phrases, clauses, or sentences**
of EQUAL grammatical rank, of EQUAL
importance.
There are only six: and, yet, but
or, nor, for.
("so" is sometimes listed.)

-They boiled kohlrabis <u>and</u> salsify.
("kohlrabis" and "salsify" are of equal grammatical
importance; they are both direct objects of the verb
"boiled." Thus, "and" links equal parts of the
sentence.)

-Sally bought a new hat, <u>but</u> she dropped it in the mud
when she left the shop.
"Sally bought a new hat" and "she dropped it in the
mud when she left the shop" are independent clauses;
they are equally important; the "but" therefore links
equal ideas.)

<u>**Subordinating Conjunctions:**</u> **connect clauses that are of UNEQUAL**
grammatical rank, of UNEQUAL importance.
They make a clause subordinate, dependent,
less grammatically significant.

Here are some: although, since, if, when,
where, how, why, while, whereas, whether,
until, because, after, before, as, unless,
than

<u>**After**</u> **we left, the party died. ("After" makes**
the clause "we left" less important than
the clause, "the part died.")

Molly smiled <u>when</u> her front tooth fell out.
(The important idea here in "Molly
smiled." "When" makes the clause "her
front tooth fell out" less important.)

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PUNCTUATION

Punctuation is a system of pauses to give clarity to what was said and to convey meaning, emphasis, and tone,.

Note how punctuation changes meaning:

> **A woman without her man is nothing.**
> **A woman: without her, man is nothing.**

Note how punctuation changes tone:

> **I love you. (a factual statement; no emotion)**
> **I love you! (an emotional statement)**
> **I love you? (a doubtful; statement)**

Note how punctuation changes clarity:

> **Let's eat, Momma.   (a clear request)**
> **Let's eat Momma. (a gruesome prospect)**

END PUNCTUATION

End punctuation completes a sentence:

<u>Period</u>: a serious, calm, unemotional statement of fact.

> **Vendettas are common among vengeful men.**

<u>Question Mark:</u> asks a question in a doubtful situation.

> **Are you sure that the year 2000 began a new millennium?**

<u>Exclamation Point</u>: shows a strong emotion or strong command.

> **Close the door now!**
> **How disgusting is that!**

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THE COMMA

The comma (,) is a very brief pause. It is not a substitution for any other punctuation mark.

Its uses are many, the chief of which are these:

1.   <u>**To separate independent clauses in a compound sentence when the clauses are connected by a coordinate conjunction**</u> (and, yet, but, or, nor, for)

Mares eat oats, and does eat oats, and little lambs eat ivy.
Wordsworth is a famous poet, but he is also a great critic.

Comma Splice: omission of the coordinate conjunction. An error.
The book was opened, the page was ripped.

Run-on Sentence (Fused Sentence): omission of the coordinate conjunction
and the comma. An error.
The book was opened the page was ripped.

2.   <u>**To separate items in a series of more than two (the serial comma)**</u>

The desk contained ink, papers, a lamp, and a map.
Wynken, Blynken, and Nod one night sailed off in a wooden shoe.
NOTE; Never insert a comma when there are only two items in the series:
The desk contained ink and papers.
Do retain the comma between the last two items in the series even
when they are linked by a coordinate conjunction:
At the picnic, we played games, ate lunch, and told stories.

3.   <u>**To separate nonrestrictive modifiers from the rest of the sentence**</u>

A nonrestrictive modifier is a word, phrase, or clause not essential in the sentence.

My only brother, who lives in Brooklyn, fell into the canal and drowned.
(The clause, "who lives in Brooklyn," is not needed to identify the brother, since the writer has only one brother.)
My brother who lives in Brooklyn fell into the canal and drowned.
(the clause, "who lives in Brooklyn," is a restrictive clause, one needed to identify the brother, since the writer has three brothers living in different places. Thus, the clause is not surrounded by commas.)

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4. **To separate appositives from the rest of the sentence**

An appositive is an alternate identification.
Edgar Allan Poe, <u>author of "The Pit and the Pendulum,"</u> once lived in the
 Bronx.
Abraham Lincoln, <u>sixteenth president of the United States</u>, fought to
 preserve the Union.
The underlined are the appositives.

5. **To separate parenthetical elements and transitions from the rest of the sentence**

A parenthetical element is a comment that interrupts the sentence.
A transition is a word or phrase moving a thought from a previous sentence
or paragraph (however, therefore, thus, nevertheless, etc.).

Your work, <u>I am sure</u>, will be challenging.
William said, <u>however</u>, that he would be available for work.

6. **To separate introductory words, phrases, or clauses**

<u>Consequently</u>, all the poinsettias died in the cold. (A word introduces the
 main clause.)
<u>In the summer</u>, children play Giant Steps. (A phrase introduces the main
 clause.)
<u>Since you lied to me</u>, I no longer trust you. (A minor clause introduces the
 main clause.)

7. **To separate a city from a stsate or country**

Brooklyn, <u>New York</u>, is my home town.
Ouagadougou, <u>Burkina Faso</u>, is that nation's capital.

NOTE: Commas go before and after the state or country.

8. **To separate a day from a year**

January 31, <u>2016,</u> is National Gorilla Suit Day.
May 9, <u>2016,</u> is National Lost Sock Day<u>.</u>

NOTE: Commas go before and after the year.

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9.   **To separate direct address from the rest of the sentence**

  Direct address means that the speaker is naming the person to whom he is speaking.

  Rodney, peal me a grape.
  I asked you, **Miss Gomez**, to bury the dead cat.
  And now, **ladies and gentlemen**, here is tonight's speaker!

10.   **To introduce a short quotation or to separate an interruption in a quotation**

  Paul asked, "Where is my eggplant?"
  "If I survive this semester," Monica said, "I will need a vacation."

11.   **To prevent misreading**

  Confusing: Inside the house was brightly decorated.
  Clear: Inside, the house was brightly decorated.

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THE SEMICOLON

The semicolon (;) is a pause longer than a comma but shorter than a period.
It is not interchangeable with a comma.

a.   **Use a semicolon to separate independent clauses in a compound sentence.**

Frank chose a hot dog; Mary chose a hamburger.
Carson City is the capital of Nevada; Salt Lake City is the capital of Utah.

b.   **Use a semicolon to separate items in a series of more than two items when the items contain a comma.**

Mr. Warner, my teacher, Mrs. Costa, my aunt, Miss Rudolph, my colleague, and Mr. Wilder came with me.
   Problem: How many came with me: four, five, six, or seven? Is Mr. Warner my teacher? Is Mrs. Costa my aunt? Is Miss Rudolph my colleague?
   If they are my teacher, aunt, and colleague, then I need to use a semicolon to separate clearly the persons:

   Mr. Warner, my teacher; Mrs. Costa, my aunt; Miss Rudolph, my colleague; and Mr. Wilder came with me.

THE COLON

The colon (:) is the Ed Sullivan of punctuation marks. It introduces a list, a series, and a long quotation.

--Please bring to the picnic the following things: mustard, ketchup, watermelon, bagels, salt and pepper, and ant traps.
   Note: the colon comes after the direct object. Do not write "Please bring to the picnic: mustard . . . . " You need a direct object before the dcolon.

--Tocqueville said: "In the United States, we easily perceive how the legal profession is qualified by its attributes . . . to neutralize the vices inherent in popular government."

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The apostrophe indicates the omission of one or more letters. It must be used; it is not optional.

Uses of the Apostrophe:

1. **Possessive Case:**
   Singular nouns and most pronouns form their possessive case with the apostrophe + "s."
   > man = man's
   > dog = dog's
   > Richard Rodgers = Richard Rodgers's (or Rodgers')

   NOTE: Personal pronouns (I, you, he, she, it, we, they) and the pronoun "who" do not use the apostrophe in the possessive case (my, yours, his, hers, its, ours, theirs, whose).

   Plural nouns ending in "s" form their possessive case by adding only the apostrophe:
   > boys = boys'
   > walruses = walruses'

   Plural nouns ending in a consonant other than "s" form their plurals by adding an apostrophe + "s."
   > women = women's

2. **Contractions**

   A contractions combines two words into one by omitting one or more letters; the omission is marked by an apostrophe.

   > do not = don't
   > have not = haven't
   > of the clock = o'clock
   > it is = it's ["its" is the possessive case of "it."]

3. **Plural of Letters and Numbers**

   The plural of letters and numbers uses the apostrophe:
   He wrote six "9's on the blackboard.
   Watch your P's and Q's.

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QUOTATION MARKS

DOUBLE QUOTATION MARKS indicate an exact reproduction of a person's words. Introduce a short quotation with a comma and a long quotation with a colon, especially if the long quotation is a complete sentence. A quotation that is part of the main statement gets no introductory punctuation:

Walter said, "I will call you later."

Shakespeare wrote: "The quality of mercy is not strained. It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath. It is twice blest. It blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

If you say "the end is near," I shall ignore you.

Omit quotation marks around an indirect quotation, that is, a paraphrase of someone's statement:

Walter said that he will call later.

SINGLE QUOTATION MARKS indicate a quotation inside a quotation:

The professor said, "Memorize Hamlet's speech beginning 'To be or not to be.'"

ALTERATION OF QUOTATIONS

Quotations are the exact words of a writer or speaker and may not be altered without advising the reader that they have been changed.

ELLIPSIS indicates the omission of one or more words in a quotation. The ellipsis is THREE SPACED PERIOD.

Shakespeare wrote," The quality of mercy . . . droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven . . . ." (Note the final period after the omitted ending of the sentence.)

The king said, "I demand your loyalty........ Then, I will serve you" (54), (Note that the first sentence is complete, ends with a period, and a following comment is omitted after the complete sentence.)

BRACKETS indicate an addition or change in a quotation, even a spelling or punctuation change. The word *sic* reproduces exactly a mistake.

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PUNCTUATION OF QUOTATIONS

In the United States, periods and commas always go inside the quotation marks unless something like documentation follows the quotation:

The bus driver said, "Please step to the rear."
The author wrote, "The neoclassical movement perished in revolution" (83).

Note: In the rest of the world, commas and periods are placed outside the quotation marks.

Colons, semicolons, and dashes always go outside the quotation marks:

The speaker represented a serious organization, "dedicated to the preservation of mosquitos": The Calamine Lotion League.

Question marks and exclamation points are placed inside quotation marks if the quotation is a question or exclamation; if not, they go outside the quotation marks:

I asked, "Where is my gorilla suit?"
Miss Landers shouted, "Beaver, stop pulling Judy's pigtails!"

Did you ask, "Why are we having pumpkin soup for supper?"
> NOTE: You need only one question mark when a quotation that is a question comes at the end of a sentence that is a question.

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